Hair Growth.

It is a curious fact that a boy's hair grows one-half slower than a girl's. In boys the average rate of growth is three feet three inches in six years, being an average of .018 inch a day. During the twenty-first and twenty-fourth years a man's hair grows quicker than at any other period. It takes an eyelash twenty weeks to reach a length of .429 inch, and then its life is from 100 to 150 days. By means of a camera the wink of an eyelid has been measured, and it was found that twenty winks can be made in four seconds.

The Top of the Ladder.

There is plenty of opportunity for superior talents. The top of the ladder of success offers plenty of standing room and invites guests. The lower part only is fearfully crowded. There is no excuse for the universal wail of lack of opportunity, for there is no lack. The trouble lies with the demands laid upon those who aspire to first place. One thing is certain, there is no quarter for the whiner and precious little encouragement for those who do not care to work with might and main.—Chicago Journal.

An Oversight of Nature.

It is desirable to exclude light and sound, but, while we have eyelids, no apparatus for closing the ears is known, save, I believe, in certain animals which inhabit the sea and whose ears are of small auditory importance. In these days, when noises of all kinds, more or less nerve wrecking, assail the ears by night as well as by day, one may be pardoned if he sighs wearily for ear lids.—London Academy.

A Willing Worker.

"Ma, what are the folks in our church gettin' up a subscription for?"

"To send our minister on a vacation to Europe."

"An' won't there be no church while he's gone?"

"No preachin' services, I guess."

"Ma, I got $1.23 saved up in my bank. Can I give that?"—Cleveland Leader.

Ants' Gardens.

Brazilian ants make little gardens in the tree tops and sow them with pineapple and other seeds. The gardens are found of all sizes, from a single sprouting seed, surrounded by a little earth, to a densely overgrown ball as large as a man's head.

Genius and Eccentricity.

"You can't have genius without eccentricity."

"That may be so, but I've noticed that it's possible to have a good deal of eccentricity without much genius."—Chicago Record-Herald.

When you notice a vague accusation you give it a reality and turn a shadow into substance.—Bulwer.

The Lawyer's Fee.

"Yes," said the first burglar disgustedly, "I cracked a lawyer's house the other night, and the lawyer was there with a gun all ready fur me. He advised me ter git out."

"You got off easy," replied the other.

"Not much I didn't! He charged me $25 fur the advice."—Catholic Standard and Times.

His Sorrow.

A small boy was invited to a party given by one of his little friends. After he had eaten ice cream and cake three times somebody offered him some candy, but the little chap shook his head and said in a sorrowful tone, "I can chew, but I can't swallow."

His Share.

Dibble—Did you contribute anything to the fund for the relief of poor Tom Smith? Skinner—No, but I did better. I told him how sorry I was that he was ill.—Boston Transcript.

The best armor is to keep out of gunshot.—Bacon.

THE FIGHTER

By ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

Author of "Caleb Conover, Railroader," "Dr. Dale," "On Glory's Trail," etc.

NEW YORK
FRANK F. LOVELL COMPANY
1909

(Continued.)

CHAPTER IV.

Caleb Conover Explains.

"I suppose," volunteered Caine, as he and Conover walked back to town together, "I suppose you know you behaved like a wild ass of the desert? That no man with an iota of breeding would ever have said the things you did, to the Committee members? I only mention it in case you don't realize."

"Oh, I realize it all right," Conover answered him. "It ain't a parlor stunt to sling off your coat an' grab a lady by the back hair. But if she happens to be drownin', it's the c'rrect play to make. It was a case for coat-sheddin' an' back-hair-grabbin', today, at the Club. That's why I did it. It landed 'em. If I'd got up and sprung a flowery speech, they'd a' yawned and voted me out. If I'd put up a whine, they'd a been at my throat like a pack o' hungry wolf-dogs. Someone had to use a whip. An' I wanted it should be me, not them, that used it. Which same it was."

"No one will deny that, I think," said Caine, drily. "If a poll were taken just now for the best hated man in Arareek, you'd be elected by acclamation. You said some things that ought to have been said. But you said them so vulgarly that you seemed to be spitting diamonds."

"But I'm still in the Club. An' they daren't give me the cold shoulder at any more of their blowouts. They'll still hate me like poison, maybe. But they'll be civil; an' when Desiree Shevlin goes there with Mrs. Hawarden, she won't see folks treatin' me like I was the original Invisible Man."

Caine whistled.

"So?" he mused. That's the secret, is it? I might have guessed. I've been wondering ever since, why you made such a point about being well received at the Club's functions. For, unless I'm vastly mistaken, you've about as much desire for personal social welcome as a hermit thrush. I could see why you wanted to stay in the Arareek, but why you wanted to attend its—"

"You're barking' up the wrong tree," growled Caleb, uncomfortably. "At least you ain't much wore'n half right. Of course it's nice not to have Dey made uncomfortable on my account. But I'm going to push my way into that bunch for my own sake, too. You'll see a whole lot of things if you look long enough. Today was just a flea-bite to what's comin' before I'm done."

"Still bent on 'taking the Kingdom of Heaven by violence?'"

"Not quite that. I hear Heaven's got only the best society. I ain't after the best. Only the highest. So Granite'll do as well. Care to tell me anything 'bout the details of what happened after I left the Committee room?"

"Everybody talked at once," replied Caine. "The air fairly crackled with blue sparks of indignation. I never realized before how many names a man could be called. It was a liberal education in what not to say. Then, little by little, the Governors got out of breath, and I moved for a vote. Vroom amended my motion by suggesting a written ballot."

"I might a' knowed it," crowed Conover in high glee. "No one wanted the rest to know he was votin' for me. Good for Vroom! He comes nearer havin' hooman intell'gence than I thought."

"The amended motion was passed unanimously," went on Caine. "Oh, it was a rare study in physiognomy when Standish announced the vote. Eleven to one in favor of retaining you."

"If there'd been two votes against me, Blacarda could have been arrested for repeatin'," ruminated Conover. "Yes, that's just how I figgered it would be."

"I wasn't surprised at Vroom and Featherstone and the others you so pleasantly threatened to blackmail," said Caine. "But I thought at least Standish and Hawarden—"

"I told you I'd helped Standish's bank and that he'll want me again, soon," answered Caleb. "His gratitood market is strong on futurities."

"But Hawarden? You didn't threaten him. Yet he was muzzled after the very first attack."

"No, I didn't threaten Hawarden to any very great extent," assented Conover. "I just reminded him, quietlike, that I'm payin' his wife $8,000 a season to help Desiree in the society game, an' that maybe the news might leak out an' the supplies be cut off if I was fired."

"Mrs. Hawarden!" ejaculated Caine. "Are you in earnest?"

"I'm not given to springin' measly jokes. I wanted that the little girl should have a show. She's prettier an' better educated an' cleverer'n any of the people in the gold-shirt bunch. But I couldn't get her into that crowd. I read in a noospaper about an English duchess that made a lot of coin by puttin' American girls into the right surroundin's, an' it gave me an idee. There's a slump in the Duchess market here at Granite. But the town's crawlin' with old fam'lies that are shy on cash. An' about the oldest an' hardest up are the Hawardens. So I arranged it with her. It was dead easy. She acted shy of the deal just at first; but that was only her way, I s'pose. Women that's coy after they stop bein' young an' pretty always reminds me of a scarecrow left standin' in a field after all the crop's been carted away."

"Does Miss Shevlin know about—?"

"Does she know? What do you think she is? No, son, she don't know, an' I'll break the neck of the blackguard that dares tell her. You're the only one except the Hawardens that's onto it."

"So I am the logical candidate for neck-breaking if the story gets out? Don't be afraid, old man. I'd break my own neck sooner than to have Miss Shevlin's pleasure spoiled. I suppose she does get pleasure from being a protegee of Mrs. Hawarden?"

"Pleasure? She's tickled to death. It's worth the money twice over to hear her tell 'bout the places she goes. Say, Caine, you know more about that game than I do. Has she got any chance?"

"Any chance?" echoed Caine in perplexity.

"You know what I mean. Her father was kind of common,—like me. But Desiree ain't. Even you said that once. An' I guess there's few who can spot a streak of mud-color quicker'n you can. I've got her into a crowd where her father an' the rest of her folks could never have gone. What I want to know is: Has she got a chance of stayin' there always? Of bein' took up permanent by 'em an' made one of 'em?"

"It depends entirely, I should say, on whom she marries."

"You mean if she marries some feller who's high up in that set, she'll be made to home there?"

There was something wistfully eager beneath the Fighter's gruff tones,—a something Caine detected in time to check the flippant reply that had risen to his own lips. He eyed Conover with veiled curiosity as he asked:

"You would want her to marry such a man?"

"Sure! If he treated her right an' she was happy. But if she's goin' to be looked down on, an' guyed behind folk's fans, an' reminded that her old man used to eat corned beef and cabbage in his shirt-sleeves—why, then I'm damned if I don't b'lieve I'd buy up the whole of Granite an' turn the swells out into the next County."

"It all depends, as I said, on the man she marries," pursued Caine. "If she marries a man of good family and turns her back on her old associates and has enough money of her own—"

"She'll have it," interrupted Conover. "She'll have enough to make her the richest woman in this burg—an' it'll be in her own name, too. As for shakin' folks like me,—if I haven't got my own foot hold there by that time,—she'll do that too. I'll see that she does."

"And yet you're fond of her?"

"That's why I'm doin' it, son. An' remember you'll keep on bein' the only one besides the Hawardens that knows anything 'bout my share in the deal. Speakin' of 'deals,' Blacarda means trouble for us."

"In the Steeloid affair?" queried Caine. "I thought you'd won that fight."

"I won that, but there's another a-comin'. I got a tip of it same time I heard of the incorp'ration, to-day. Blacarda pulls a pretty big oar in the Legislature. He's back of that Starke Anti-Combine bill we side-tracked early in the session. If the Starke bill passes, then good-bye to our Steeloid corner! I've a tip he's renewed it an' tryin' to rush it through before the session closes. It's to be sprung on the Assembly, Monday. An' he figgers on gettin' it railroaded through. If it once passes the Assembly, we're goners. For he's got the State Senate where he wants it. An' the Gov'nor's on his side. Owns a nice block of stock in Blacarda's comp'ny. So it all hangs on the Assembly."

"You take it coolly—considering you stand to lose something like a million dollars."

"A man who can't keep his feet warm an' his head cool has about as much show in finance as a guncotton undershirt in hell," observed Caleb, oracularly. "He goes up with a puff and there ain't any remains to look for. I'm not in the Steeloid deal to cure me of weak heart or that tired feelin'. I'm in to win. An' I'm goin' to."

"But the Assembly?"

"I'm not afraid about the Assembly. So long as I'm on hand myself, in the lobby, to hand out kicks or kisses, I'll be able to kill the Starke bill. I've gone up to the Capital before, on what looked like a losin' fight. An' I've licked the obstinate one into shape, an' scared some backbone into the weak one, an' put a little bank-note oil on the rusty one—an' swung enough of 'em into line to give me the votes I needed. I know this Assembly pretty well. I know who to count on an' who not to. I know who to buy, who to bully an' who to promise. If I sent up anyone else, he'd make a fizzle of the thing. But, somehow, in all my business deals, I find if I'm on the ground myself I can make folks do what I want. You saw how that was, to-day, at the Club. If I'd been away, an' you or anyone else representin' me, I'd a' been kicked out of the Arareek so far that I'da-landed in another State. But I swung 'em. An' I'll swing 'em at the Capital. It'll be a narrow squeak, but I'll do it."

"In other words, if you are there in person, the day the bill comes up, you can kill it. Otherwise not. Suppose you're sick, or—"

"Sick!" scoffed Caleb, in lofty scorn. "I've got no time to be sick. An' s'spose I was? When I worked that merger of the Porter-Hyde Park road I had grippe. My temp'ture was up at 105, an' I had lovely little icicles an' red hot pokers runnin' through every joint of me. Likewise a head that ached so loud you could hear it a block away. Gee, but I felt so bad I hated to look up at the undertaker signs on the street! An' what'd I do? Worked, up to the Capital, three days an' nights, twenty-four hours a day, not once gettin' a chance to take my clo'es off or bat an eye. I carried through that merger by the skin of its teeth. Then when I got my charter I blew myself to the lux'ry of a whole gorgeous week in the hosp'tal. But not till ev'ry bit of work was wound up. Sick? H'm! A grown man don't bother much about bein' sick when there's something that's got to be done. Besides"—he added—"I ain't sick now. An' I'll be on hand at the Capital the minute the Assembly opens, Monday. My bein' there means the killin' of the Starke bill. An' they can set the date for the fun'ral without any fear of disappointin' the mourners."

"Did you ever hear of Napoleon?" asked Caine, whimsically.

"Sure I did," responded Conover. "Read part of a book about him once. Why?"

"Like yourself he was the greatest hold-up man of his day," explained Caine, "and he had a conscience of the same calibre as yours. If he'd been a little bit less of a highwayman they would have laughed at him. If you were a little bit less of a highwayman they'd put you in jail. He had magnetism. Probably almost as much of it as you have. That's what made me think of him just then. Wellington used to say that Napoleon's mere presence on a battlefield did more to win victories than an army of forty thousand men. I suppose it's the same at the Assembly."

"That's right," agreed Caleb, unmoved. "An' Blacarda knows it, too. He'd give ten thousand dollars, I'll bet, to have me break a leg between this an' Monday. But my legs are feelin' first rate. An' they're goin' to keep on feelin' better all the time, till they kick the Starke bill into its grave."

"I'll do what I can through the 'Star' to help," said Caine. "Just as I did for the Porter-Hyde Park merger and the Humason Mine charter. What's the use of owning a newspaper if one can't boost one's friends?"

"An' one's own Steeloid stock at the same time?" supplemented Conover. "We understand each other all right. I guess. Steeloid's goin' to take a rise, after Monday. An' it's goin' to keep right on risin' for the next six months."

"Conover," protested Caine, "as a highwayman—or financier, to put it more politely—you are a genius. But as a man, you leave a ghastly amount to be desired. Have you a superstitious fear of the world 'Thanks'? I offer to put the columns of the 'Star' at your disposal. Common decency at least should call for a word of gratitude. Or, if not for the Steeloid matter, at least for my championing you to-day at the Club. Surely that wasn't in the interest of your wonderful Steeloid stock."

Conover plodded ahead glumly for some moments. Then he observed, as though turning to a pleasanter subject:

"In the part of that Napoleon book I read it told how the old-line, patent-leather 'ristocrats of France fell over each other to do things that would make a hit with the big 'hold-up man'. Wasn't it real gen'rous of 'em? But then, maybe Napoleon had a cute little way of sayin' 'Thanks,' oftener'n I do."

CHAPTER V.

An Interlude.

"Why folks should drink tea when they're not thirsty, an' gobble sweet crackers when they're not hungry," observed Conover, impersonally, as he balanced his cup and saucer on one thick palm and stared at the tea as though it might turn and rend him, "is somethin' I never could make out. As far as I can learn, s'ciety is made up of doin' things you don't want to at times you don't need to."

"There is nothing in afternoon tea," quoted Desiree,

"To appeal to a person like me.
There's too little to eat,
What there is is too sweet.
And I feel like a cow up a tree."

"And" improvised Caine,

"In Boston we threw away tea
Because of King George's decree.
When England disputed,
We just revoluted.
Hurray for the Land of the Free!

"And now that we've all testified," he added, "may I please have another cup? If not, I'm going to keep on repeating insipid verses till I get it."

The two men had dropped in at the Shevlin house on their way from the Arareek Club. Desiree had listened delightedly to Caleb's expurgated account of the Committee meeting, and at the story's close had rung for tea. Caine was a prime favorite of hers. Caleb was wont to lean back and listen in unaffected admiration to their talk—about one-half of which he could understand. His hazarded remark about tea had been thus far the Fighter's only contribution to the chatter. Emboldened by it he now ventured a second observation.

"I see by the 'Star'," said he, "that there's goin' to be a blowout up at Standishes', week after next. A dinner party and a musicale. Whatever a musicle may be. You're goin' of course, Caine?"

"Yes," replied Caine, adding flippantly, "of course you are?"

"Yes," said Caleb, slowly. "I thing I am."

"You're not in earnest?" cried Desiree, surprised.

"I'm in earnest all right. It'll be a big affair. I think I'll go to the musicle an' the dinner too."

(To be Continued.)

How a Club Went Out of Existence.

Some years ago about a dozen men at Oxford formed a sort of "marriage club." It was agreed that when any member was about to be married a dinner should be held which all within reach should attend—the bachelors to pay. Marriage seemed far away then, and the bachelors thought the divided expenses would be inconsiderable. Years passed and now and again the announcement of another marriage was sent around. They met, coming from various walks of life—soldier, barrister, solicitor, journalist, schoolmaster, man about town and the rest—sang the old songs, dug up the old jokes, until one year it happened that the final bachelor found himself sole host. A year later the difficulty arose, and the final bachelor was given his dinner by the eleven married men. And now the friends meet on the anniversaries of their wedding days and pay each his own score. There is perhaps the ideal club.—London Chronicle.

A Delicate Art.

To transfer an old oil painting to a new canvas is a branch of art that calls for a unison of mechanical skill and talent. There are not many men in the business. It is an entirely distinct work from renovating a cracked or mutilated painting. Transferring a painting from an old canvas to a new one requires years of experience to accomplish the simplest part of it. After the picture has been removed from its frame several layers of fine tissue paper are pasted firmly across the surface. When the paper is dry the back of the canvas is made thoroughly wet. Thread by thread it is picked away until nothing remains but the paint, which is fast to the tissue paper. A new canvas is then mounted and glued to the back of the picture. When the glue is dry the tissue paper is moistened and gently removed from the surface. A little cleaning and retouching by a skilled hand make the work complete.

No Bribery.

An amusing episode in politics is vouched for by a minister of religion as having occurred near Gillingham, England. A lady canvasser for one of the local candidates called at a house, found that the voter was out and inquired of the wife, "You think he will vote for my candidate, do you not?"

"Indeed he won't," replied the woman. "He has been promised a new pair of trousers if he votes for the other man."

The lady canvasser scented a petition for bribery, produced a sovereign and said, "I will give you this if you will tell me who made your husband that promise."

"Certainly I will," said the voter's wife as she pocketed the money. "I promised him them myself."

Man and His Necktie.

"Men's taste in neckties," says a New York haberdasher, "is the most fickle thing imaginable. You can never be sure of it. It often happens that a scarf pattern which has a tremendous run for a year or two is reproduced after a few seasons, and no one wants to buy it. On the other hand, a design you could hardly give away this year may become the craze next year. Why, no one has ever been able to discover. One year men will revel in red scarfs and the next will have nothing but greens or blues or purples. Talk about women's taste in dress being uncertain—man's is more so. Outfitters can only guess at it. Experience avails nothing."